



# World Regions

## Education in the Industrialized World

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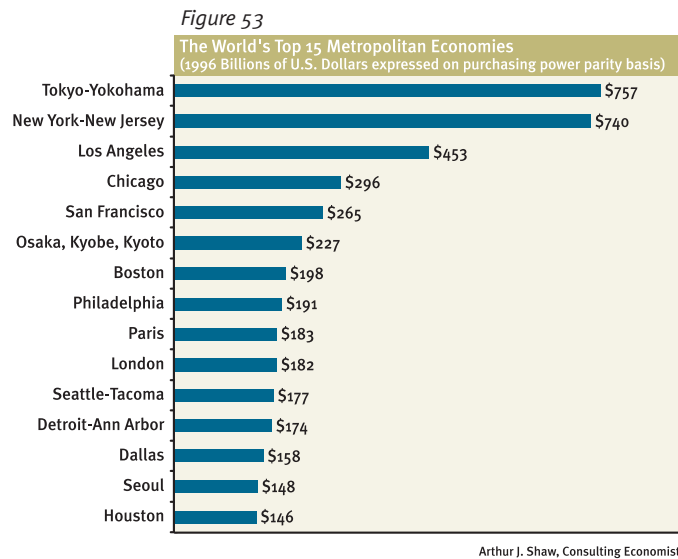
A recent major international study shows that American high school graduation rates, which had been the highest in the world for generations, have now slipped below those of most industrialized nations. The report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris shows a graduation rate of 77 percent, the highest in the 29 industrialized countries in the OECD, for Americans between the ages of 55 and 64 who graduated from high school four decades ago. The graduation rate for Americans between the ages of 24 and 34 place the United States in eighth place among that group. The current graduation rates for Americans, at 72 percent, place the United States now second to last in the group, above Mexico. Comparing adult literacy rates, the study places American among the industrialized world's least literate people.

While the United States spends a great amount on education, this expenditure is about average when compared as a percentage of gross domestic product. Expenditure per pupil in the United State is among the highest for all OECD countries at all levels of education. Teacher pay in America, however, is among the lowest, while the demands on teacher time in the classroom is among the highest.

Education was the top concern in recent elections for state and federal offices throughout the country. A growing number of states are adopting accountability systems which include rewards and punishments to raise student achievement. Various states offer monetary rewards to teachers, schools, or districts that post student gains. And an increasing number of states threaten school districts or individual schools with sanctions, ranging from warnings to takeovers, for persistent failure to adequately educate the students.

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## The Global Economy



World metropolitan regions are compared in terms of their estimated gross domestic/gross regional product (the estimated market value of all goods and services produced in the area in one year.) The GDP/GRP figures are converted to U.S. dollars on a purchasing power parity basis in order to value consistently goods and services produced in different countries. Under this approach, the Los Angeles metropolitan region is the third largest in the world, behind Tokyo-Yokohama and New York-New Jersey.